

REMARKS

Receipt is acknowledged of the Office Action of January 7, 2005. Claims 1-5 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1 and 5 have been rejected in the Office Action. Claims 2-4 were objected to by the Examiner, however, the Examiner indicated that the objected claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants thank the Examiner for this early indication of the allowable subject matter. Applicants amended Claim 1 of the application and request reconsideration of the rejection, as explained in more detail below.

Claims 1 and 5 were rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,357,163 ("Minakuchi et al."). Independent Claim 1, as currently amended, is directed toward a hydrodynamic bearing system having a shaft with an axial bore formed therein; a radial bearing rotatably supporting the shaft; and an annular thrust plate mounted on an outer cylindrical surface of the shaft. The axial bore is formed in an area where the thrust plate is to be positioned. A fixing element affixes the thrust plate to the shaft, by being inserted into the axial bore of the shaft. Because an outer diameter of the fixing element is greater than an inner diameter of the axial bore, insertion of the fixing element into the axial bore expands the outer diameter of the shaft thereby permanently affixing the thrust plate to the outer cylindrical surface of the shaft.

Minakuchi et al. discloses a dynamic-pressure type bearing device including a cylindrical sleeve and a shaft rotatably inserted into a hollow of the cylindrical sleeve. A disc-like plate 6 is coaxially and fixedly secured to an end portion of the shaft with a screw 7. Therefore, the thrust plate 6 is not "mounted on an outer cylindrical surface of said shaft" as required by the presently amended Claim 1.

Thus, Applicants believe that current independent Claim 1 is patentable over the prior art of record. Dependent Claims 2-5 are believed to define patentable subject matter in view of their dependency upon allowable Claim 1 and, further, on their own merits.

The Examiner is urged to telephone Applicant's undersigned counsel at the number noted below if it will advance the prosecution of this application, or with any suggestion to resolve any condition that would impede allowance. In the event that any extension of time is required, Applicant petitions for that extension of time required to make this response timely. Kindly charge any additional fee, or credit any surplus, to Deposit Account No. 50-0675, Order No. 057517-0046.

Respectfully submitted,

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